

SURVIVAL CHECKS FOR MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES

(Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we are close to finalizing a relief package, but I ask my colleagues: Relief for whom?

A relief package without survival checks is not a relief package at all, nor is a relief package that leaves out millions of immigrants and their families. Any deal that we strike must include survival checks to families and immigrants, and mixed-status families must be included.

Earlier this year, countless families that I represent were denied stimulus checks, including U.S. citizens whose spouses are immigrants. We even excluded children who may have an immigrant parent.

How in the world did we exclude U.S. citizen children?

In this season of sacred holidays, I implore all of us to be compassionate and not punish kids for their parents' status. Families are struggling to put food on their tables and keep roofs over their heads.

Circumstances are dire. We need to put money directly into working families' pockets. I urge my colleagues that any relief package must include survival checks for everyone, including immigrant children.

HONORING THOSE WHO HONOR OUR VETERANS

(Mr. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Johnny Isakson and DAVID P. ROE, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, a bipartisan legislative package that includes two bills that I have proudly introduced this Congress, the VET TEC Expansion Act and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020.

Since coming to Congress in 2007, one of my most important priorities in this Chamber has been to protect and improve the benefits that our Nation's veterans have earned and deserve. I introduced the VET TEC Expansion Act and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act earlier this Congress in response to comments and feedback I received from veterans and veterans organizations throughout my district and across the country.

Both pieces of legislation seek to build upon existing veterans benefits programs, including the VET TEC pilot program and the HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program, by expanding and streamlining them for veterans and veterans service providers who utilize them.

The VET TEC Expansion Act will continue to ensure that our heroes can enhance skills they developed in the

military when returning to private life by providing access to nontraditional and technology-oriented courses through the VET TEC pilot program. This bill would expand VET TEC to include part-time courses and permit additional course providers into the VET TEC pilot program.

I am also pleased that H.R. 7105, like the initial House-passed version of this bill, would increase the VET TEC funding authorization by \$30 million per year through 2023 to help the VA meet demand for this popular program with our veterans.

In addition, no veteran in my district or anywhere in the country should be homeless due to unnecessary VA staffing vacancies. The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act would require that the VA contract out any consistently vacant HUD-VA Supportive Housing case management positions to community experts so that unused housing vouchers can be matched with homeless veterans who need them the most.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank Dr. ROE for his unwavering commitment to our Nation's veterans throughout his time in this Congress, specifically as chairman and ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee over the course of the past 4 years and for his own personal service to the United States Army, serving in Korea.

His strong leadership on behalf of our fellow veterans has been unwavering since he came to Congress, and his tenacity, knowledge, and friendship will be missed in this Chamber after he retires from Congress.

On behalf of a very grateful Nation, we thank Dr. ROE for his servant's heart, for putting the veterans first, and for improving the quality of the care for them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill and thanking Congressman ROE for his service.

HOPE AND DESPAIR IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, there is a mix of hope and despair in central Florida.

This week, the first vaccines arrived to help protect our healthcare professionals. But unemployment remains around 10 percent; food banks lay bare; many are behind on rent; and coronavirus cases continue to rise.

The message is clear in both Florida and across our Nation: Americans need help.

It is time for this Congress to come together and pass meaningful coronavirus emergency relief to defeat the virus; to help small businesses and the unemployed; and to ensure food, housing, and direct stimulus checks for our constituents.

The solution is within our grasp. We just need to come together this week to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues: Don't be an Ebenezer Scrooge. Embrace the Christmas spirit. Join me and vote "yes."

RECOGNIZING MIKE VUCKOVICH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a special shout-out to Mike Vuckovich, superintendent of the Indiana Area School District.

Mike was recently recognized as one of America's Superintendents to Watch for 2020. He was one of only 24 recipients to receive this recognition and the only Pennsylvanian.

Mike has been on the job just 2 years but recently was recognized by the National School Public Relations Association as a 2020 Superintendent to Watch. The organization selects superintendents from across the country who "demonstrate dynamic, fast-paced leadership with strong communication at its core."

This is exactly what Mike has done with his time at Indiana Area School District.

Mike has been a champion for digital technology and online communication throughout the district, investments that have clearly come in handy in the age of coronavirus. The district's new website and social media accounts have been a useful tool to keep parents, teachers, and students on the same page during what has undoubtedly been a hectic and stressful school year.

I thank Mike for his drive, dedication, and initiative, and I am pleased to have a leader like Mike in Indiana County.

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EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SHOOTING

(Mrs. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the 26 beautiful lives that were lost on December 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Mr. Speaker, 8 years ago, 20 innocent children and six selfless educators were murdered in what should have been the safest places in their community: their school.

Today, I ask that we pause, reflect, remember, and recommit ourselves to working to ensure that this never happens again.

For many residents of Newtown, Connecticut, 8 years feels like yesterday. Time has stood still for so many families as they attempt to rebuild their

community and honor the precious memory of their children and educators.

Mr. Speaker, much needs to be done to ensure that our schools and communities are safe places. We owe it to the 26 families from Sandy Hook to work together to make this happen. We owe it to the over 38,000 people who will die each year from gun violence to do better. We owe it to the 50 million people who are affected by mental health challenges each year. We owe it to ourselves, because we are capable of creating change.

Mr. Speaker, today, we honor, remember, and reflect, and then we get back to work.

IN RECOGNITION OF DAWN BAKER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Savannah, Georgia, WTOC news anchor Dawn Baker for appearing in this year's "CNN Heroes" special. In the special, she was recognized as the first person to participate in phase 3 of the COVID-19 vaccine trial in the U.S.

Local news anchors have thousands of viewers, so they have a great responsibility to serve as positive leaders in their community. By demonstrating the importance and safety of the coronavirus vaccine, which is now being distributed across the country, Dawn has exemplified the qualities of a true leader.

However, this is not the first time Dawn has been a hero. Throughout her career in journalism, she has blessed countless lives through her dedication to improving her community and the State of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I take this time to thank all heroes like Dawn Baker for stepping up to the plate during an unprecedented time and demonstrating commitment to a better, healthier America.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 16, 2020.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 16, 2020, at 11:30 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 2032.

That the Senate passed S. 2054.

That the Senate passed S. 3152.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4356.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6100.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 7259.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 8354.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

ROBERT F. REEVES,
Deputy Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DEPENDABLE EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 7105) to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020".

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Determination of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—EDUCATION

Subtitle A—Education Generally

Sec. 1001. Improvements to Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1002. Expansion of eligibility for Fry Scholarship to children and spouses of certain deceased members of the Armed Forces.

Sec. 1003. Period for election to receive benefits under All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1004. Phase out of All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 1005. Requirements for in-State tuition.

Sec. 1006. Expansion of authority for certain qualifying work-study activities for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include outreach services provided through congressional offices.

Sec. 1007. Restoration of entitlement to rehabilitation programs for veterans affected by school closure or disapproval.

Sec. 1008. Technical correction to clarify eligibility for participation in Yellow Ribbon Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1009. Clarification of educational assistance for individuals who pursue an approved program of education leading to a degree while on active duty.

Sec. 1010. Verification of enrollment for purposes of receipt of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits.

Sec. 1011. Clarification regarding the dependents to whom entitlement to educational assistance may be transferred under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 1012. Expansion of reasons for which a course of education may be disapproved.

Sec. 1013. Oversight of educational institutions with approved programs: risk-based surveys.

Sec. 1014. Oversight of educational institutions subject to Government action for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1015. Additional requirement for approval of educational institutions for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1016. Clarification of accreditation for law schools for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1017. Clarification of grounds for disapproval of a course for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1018. Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 1019. Overpayments to eligible persons or veterans.

Sec. 1020. Improvements to limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices.

Sec. 1021. Charge to entitlement to educational assistance for individuals who do not transfer credits from certain closed or disapproved programs of education.

Sec. 1022. Department of Veterans Affairs treatment of for-profit educational institutions converted to nonprofit educational institutions.

Sec. 1023. Authority of State approving agencies to conduct outreach activities.

Sec. 1024. Limitation on colocation and administration of State approving agencies.

Sec. 1025. Elimination of period of eligibility for training and rehabilitation for certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Subtitle B—Pandemic Assistance

Sec. 1101. Definitions.

Sec. 1102. Continuation of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance benefits during COVID-19 emergency.

Sec. 1103. Effects of closure of educational institution and modification of courses by reason of COVID-19 emergency.

Sec. 1104. Payment of educational assistance in cases of withdrawal.

Sec. 1105. Modification of time limitations on use of entitlement.

Sec. 1106. Apprenticeship or on-job training requirements.

Sec. 1107. Inclusion of training establishments in certain provisions related to COVID-19 emergency.